

**TRIAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
HOUSING COURT DEPARTMENT**

**STANDING ORDER 4-20: SUPPLEMENT TO HOUSNG COURT STANDING ORDERS
2-20 AND 3-20 RELATING TO THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) OUTBREAK**

In response to the Supreme Judicial Court's April 1, 2020 Order "regarding court operations under the exigent circumstances created by the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic" ("SJC Order"), the Chief Justice of the Housing Court, pursuant to his statutory authority under G.L. c. 211B, § 10 and G.L. c. 185C, § 8A, hereby promulgates this Standing Order for the Housing Court Department, which shall be effective April 6, 2020. This Order is intended to be consistent with the SJC Order and supplement Housing Court Standing Orders 2-20 and 3-20, to the extent those two Orders are not inconsistent with this Order. This Order is temporary and is subject to be modified or rescinded at any time, as necessary to address the fluctuating circumstances arising from the coronavirus pandemic.

1. All Housing Court divisions shall continue to conduct court business during regular business hours and, through May 4, 2020, shall hear only emergency matters, as set forth in Housing Court Standing Order 3-20. Where appropriate, such matters shall be heard telephonically or through video conferencing. All other court events, including cases in which an out-of-court agreement for judgment is filed and not approved by the court, shall be scheduled for, or continued to, a date no earlier than May 4, 2020. A party may seek to advance its court event, upon filing a motion and by making a showing of good cause. Where practical, such motion shall be electronically filed ("eFiled") through the eFiling system.
2. Effective May 5, 2020, the opening speech and "the call of the list" conducted during summary process sessions are suspended.
3. All executions for possession and money judgments, court-ordered deadlines, and deadlines set forth in statutes or court rules, standing orders, or guidelines that expired or will expire before May 4, 2020, are tolled through that date, unless otherwise specifically ordered by the court. The new deadline in each instance is to be computed as set forth in the SJC Order.
4. Any default judgment entered between March 1, 2020, and through May 4, 2020, shall be vacated, upon motion. After May 4, 2020, judges may exercise flexibility and discretion in vacating default judgments and in granting continuances, as may be required in the interest of the health and safety of the parties and the general public.

SO ORDERED.

/s/ Timothy F. Sullivan

Timothy F. Sullivan,
Chief Justice, Housing Court Department

Date: April 3, 2020